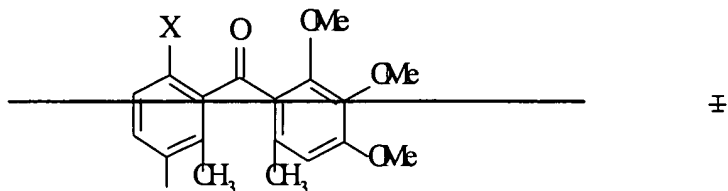
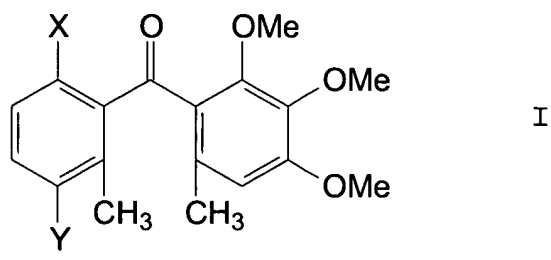


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

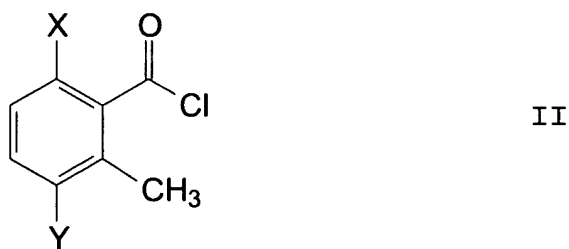
1. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing benzophenones of the formula I,



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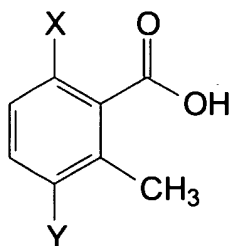
where X may be chlorine, hydroxyl, methoxy or C₁-C₆-alkylcarbonyloxy, and Y may be chlorine or bromine, by reacting an acid chloride of the formula II



where X and Y are as defined above with 3,4,5-trimethoxytoluene, which comprises carrying out the reaction in the presence of

- a) an aromatic hydrocarbon selected from the group of: chlorobenzene, benzotrifluoride and nitrobenzene as a diluent and
- b) from 0.01 to 0.2 mol% of an iron catalyst, based on the acid chloride,
- c) at a temperature between 60°C and the boiling point of the particular diluent.

2. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the diluent used is chlorobenzene.
3. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein 3,4,5-trimethoxytoluene is initially charged, optionally in the particular diluent, and the acid chloride together with the iron catalyst is metered in, optionally in the particular diluent.
4. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the hydrochloric acid forming in the reaction is removed from the reaction mixture by stripping using an inert gas stream.
5. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 4, wherein the diluent is distilled off toward the end or during the course of the reaction, and the remaining product melt is crystallized in a C₁-C₆-alcohol.
6. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the acid chloride of the formula II is prepared by reacting an acid of the formula III

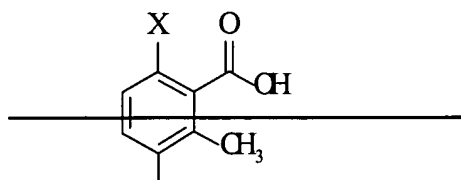


III

where X and Y are each as defined above with thionyl chloride or phosgene, optionally in the presence of dimethylformamide, in the same diluent which is also used in the subsequent Friedel-Crafts stage.

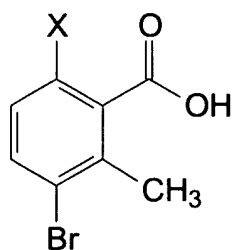
7. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 6, wherein, after formation of the acid chloride II, at least a portion of the diluent is distilled off with excess thionyl chloride and recycled into the process.

8. (Currently Amended) A process as claimed in claim 6, wherein the acid of the formula IIIa



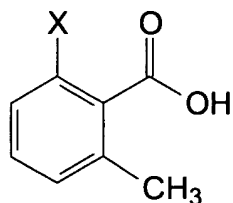
~~IIIa~~

~~Br~~



IIIa

is prepared by brominating the compound IV



IV

with elemental bromine in the same diluent which is also used in the two subsequent stages.

9. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 8, wherein at least a portion of the diluent and excess bromine is distilled off at the end of the bromination and recycled into the process.

10. (New) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the amount of iron catalyst is 0.03 to 0.1 mol%, based upon the acid chloride.

11. (New) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the amount of iron catalyst is less than 0.1 mol%, based upon the acid chloride.

12. (New) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the diluent used is benzonitrile.

13. (New) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the diluent used is nitrobenzene.